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Viewing cable 08TELAIVIV1693, U/S ROOD DIALOGUE WITH ISRAEL: NON-PROLIFERATION

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08TELAIVIV1693	2008-08-04 12:22	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Tel Aviv

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEL AVIV 001693

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EG, UN, IS

SUBJECT: U/S ROOD DIALOGUE WITH ISRAEL: NON-PROLIFERATION
AND ARMS CONTROL (3 OF 3)

REF: TEL AVIV 1691

Classified By: Classified by Charge d, Affaires Luis Moreno for reason 1
.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) On July 16, Acting Under Secretary John Rood held a Strategic Affairs Dialogue with members of the GOI, including MFA, Israeli Defense Intelligence (IDI), and the Israel Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC). This is the last of three cables covering the dialogue, focusing on non-proliferation and arms control. The previous cables (ref A and B) discussed Iran and Syria.

¶2. (C) SUMMARY: During the discussions, Acting Under Secretary Rood discussed the new cluster munitions policy and explained that we are taking steps to minimize the impact on Israel's security. Israel gave its definition of the Qualitative Military Edge (QME) and underscored that it understands the importance of supporting moderate countries within the QME. Israel also emphasized that it is in favor of civilian nuclear power programs, as long as careful safeguards are followed. On multilateral efforts, Israel believes Egypt will continue to press the nuclear-weapons free zone resolution in the UN First Committee. U/S Rood then laid out the U.S. position in other areas, including Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the Global Initiative (GI), and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Finally, Israel expressed concern over North Korea's proliferation and asked that it be emphasized during six-party talks.

Israel: Cluster Munitions Stocks Critical to Security

¶3. (C) Israel emphasized that the pre-positioned cluster munitions (CM) stocks are critical to Israel's security. They understand the USG concerns, and will continue to discuss all issues in the Cluster Munitions Working Group (CMWG). Israel will also transfer all information for unexploded ordinance (UXO clean-up), but Israel will not provide international organizations the same data it gives the U.S., as information given to those groups often end up in the wrong hands. Israel also asserted that it has been very cooperative on UXOs in Lebanon and is upset that the UN does not seem to appreciate their efforts.

¶4. (C) Under Secretary Rood pointed out that CMs are getting a lot of attention, and the Congress has taken a direct interest. While we are disappointed with the Dublin/Oslo process, we have instituted a new CM policy that addresses concerns that proponents have raised. We are doing a review of the legal process for transferring the pre-positioned CM stocks as part of this new policy. We may need to request a 614 waiver from the President, or we may seek legislative relief directly for Israel. Israel said that EUCOM indicated their pre-positioned stocks would be decommissioned in the near future under the new policy. Rood assured them that while the review is required, and the munitions in the pre-positioned stocks would eventually be replaced by 1% CMs, this is not happening anytime soon.

15. (C) Israel laid out its definition of the Qualitative Military Edge (QME) and emphasized that it understands the need to arm moderate Arab states. Israel sees the goal of the QME as ensuring that if deterrence fails, Israel would prevail quickly and with limited casualties. When assessing the QME, Israel groups their neighbors into immediate threats (Iran, Lebanon, Syria), Risks (Egypt, Saudi Arabia), and no risk (other GCC countries, Jordan as a special case).

16. (C) Israel focuses on systems over platforms, with the exception of submarines and UAVs, and analyzes synergies between systems. They also look at geographical proximity, transferability (particularly to non-state actors), regional precedent, and to a lesser extent, quantity. Offensive, self-guided weapons are the biggest threat to the QME, and the most important areas where Israel must maintain its advantage are air superiority, intel gathering, long-range force projection, and Israel's ability to maneuver. Israel is not against missile defense, for example, but believes

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Saudi Arabia's units should all be deployed in the east.

17. (C) Israel pointed out that it has only objected to 7 of the last 75 requests. Israel knows it is important to arm the moderates against Iran, but also balances that with a realistic view of the Middle East. They underscored that weapons often outlast alliances and regimes, that most weapons can easily be transferred to non-state actors, and that there is limited potential for the Gulf states to actually counter Iran. Most of their objections regard equipping the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), as they believe things like rifle scopes, anti-tank missiles and UAVs are likely to be used against Israel, and will never be used against Hizballah. The UAVs are especially problematic because of the robust intel sharing between the LAF and Hizballah.

Israel: Civilian Nuclear Power OK, If Done Right

18. (C) As more Middle Eastern countries are looking for civilian nuclear power, Rood explained that the United States is working to shape that interest positively and show counter-examples to Iran's approach. Jordan, Egypt, Bahrain, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia (KSA) all have the capacity for a civilian nuclear program, and the United States is engaged with all of them, at various stages, to get Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and 123 agreements, with requisite safeguards, including on spent fuel.

19. (C) The GOI explained that they support civilian nuclear programs, but have been raising their concerns over controls with other countries, including France, Canada, the Netherlands, India, Japan, Germany, South Korea, and the UK. Israel is most concerned about indigenous conversion and online refueling. Germany, notably, did not agree. Israel is also against additional research reactors in the region, which the IAEA seems to encourage, pointing out that there is enough research capacity. France and the UK both agreed.

110. (C) Israel said that the Canadians have been very responsive regarding the proliferation risks for their reactors and have improved their safeguards. The French told Israel that they are willing to retake spent fuel for reprocessing and return of waste, and may give Low-Enriched Uranium (LEU) credits for MOX. South Korea has said that its agreements with Westinghouse prevent them from exporting nuclear technology. Jordan has made some unhelpful public statements, but Israel is less concerned about them. Israel's priority is getting involved countries to sign the Additional Protocol. They do not think Egypt will sign the

protocol, and they say the Canadians and Chinese view it more as a guideline.

Israel: Egypt won't back down in First Committee

¶11. (C) Israel believes the Egypt will continue to press in the IAEA General Conference, UN First Committee, and in other venues, for a nuclear weapons-free zone in the Middle East, even if it has little chance of passing. Egypt wants the issue, they explained, more than the solution. Despite defeats the last two years, Egypt is actually raising the bar from what it expects and will not even discuss possible compromises with Israel. Egypt's most recent draft is even worse than last year's, as it does not reference the peace process, although this may be so they can add it in as a concession later. Israel is not sure why Egypt will no longer accept the compromise language used from 1994-2006, which Israel accepts.

¶12. (C) Under Secretary Rood pointed out that Egypt's tactics have not worked the last two years, and vote counts dropped. Israel emphasized that Egypt must be convinced to accept a consensus rather than forcing a vote. Egypt will finesse its language enough to gain more European support, reversing the downward voting trend, and then take the higher total as a victory. Rood agreed on the potential problem and said the U.S. would press the Egyptians to work for a consensus resolution.

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Other Nuclear Issues: NSG, FMCT/CD, GI, PSI, DPRK

¶13. (C) Under Secretary Rood also detailed U.S. efforts on Nuclear issues in various multilateral organizations, including the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the Global Initiative (GI), and the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). On the NSG, Rood explained that the USG has proposed a tight, criteria-based approach. We also want all indigenous enrichment to take place in a black box, with no technology transfers. Israel added that signing, rather than just discussing the Additional Protocol should be a requirement. Israel would also prefer regional solutions, such as one nuclear facility tied into the grids for several Middle East countries.

¶14. (C) At the Conference on Disarmament (CD), the United States as President is pushing for the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) but Rood pointed out that our term is running out. The USG feels the FMCT is valuable, even if verification is impossible. Rood assured the Israelis that the FMCT would not include existing stocks, and would not be predicated on Israel joining before its entry into force.

¶15. (C) Rood described the GI as extremely positive, with membership growing and the workshops going very well. Rood explained that countries that lack expertise in certain areas can host workshops on this issue as a face-saving way of inviting experts without admitting deficiencies.

¶16. (C) Rood also said the PSI is successful, although we often do not publicize successes due to regional sensitivities. Israel added that it may want to join Operation Active Endeavor, especially if it can be used more actively for interdiction.

¶17. (C) Finally, Israel expressed its concerns regarding the six-party talks with North Korea (DPRK). It is concerned that there is no clear statement against proliferation and no proliferation verification. It also thinks there are proliferation red flags because DPRK enrichment seems further along, the DPRK's plutonium numbers seem low, and missile activity continues. Israel stressed that not pursuing DPRK

proliferation could embolden other proliferators. Israel believes stopping proliferation is a more attainable goal than stopping DPRK's nuclear program completely.

118. (U) Under Secretary Rood has cleared this cable.

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